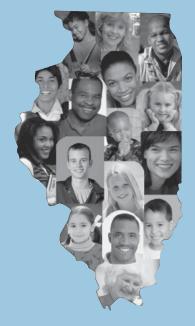


Illinois Families Now and Forever

Families by Foster Care, Adoption and Guardianship®

May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month



DCFS honors foster families and relatives who care for Illinois children.

Check the DCFS Web site for a calendar of events at DCFS offices and private agencies



www.state.il.us/dcfs



WHEREAS, more than 16,200 children are under the care of the Department of Children and Family Services due to abuse, neglect or

WHEREAS, thousands of caring foster families have opened their hearts and homes to provide for the physical, health and educational needs

WHEREAS, foster parents meet a very special need in our society by ensuring children receive attention, respect, love, compassion, and

WHEREAS, foster parents are called upon to support both children and their parents during efforts to safely reunite families of origin, when possible, and contribute to alternative permanency options; and

WHEREAS, specialized training and support services are now being provided to foster parents serving older youth, who now constitute the majority of children in DCFS care, as well as youth with intensive special needs; and

WHEREAS, there remains a significant demand for additional caring adults in Illinois to consider opening their homes to children in need of foster care; and

WHEREAS, Illinois foster parents deserve our gratitude and respect for the work they do everyday to ensure that our children can move beyond the trauma that brought them into the child welfare system and prepare them for fulfilling, productive lives in the future:

THEREFORE, I, Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim May 2007 as FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION MONTH in Illinois.

In Witness Wherevi, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.



Done at the Capitol, in the City of Springfield,

this THIRD day of APRIL, in

the Year of Our Lord two thousand and

SEVEN, and of the State of Illinois

the one hundred and EIGHTY-NINTH

Desce Vitie

SECRETARY OF STATE

Poel Blag against

GOVERNOR

From the Acting Director



Erwin McEwen

After being in the director's office for six months, I have a new perspective on Foster Parent Appreciation Month. I learned firsthand how special foster parents are, first as a social worker and then as a program administrator at an agency. Now that I have a more global view of the child welfare system, I see how absolutely critical you are. We could not carry out the mission mandated

by the State if you did not choose to carry out your personal mission.

I know that foster care is a choice from the heart. Even in those situations where the choice seems forced upon you, it is ultimately a choice you make for children. Whether it is a nephew or a young person you first met through a case file, you chose to help when others could not. Please know that we do not take your decision lightly.

Currently there are 16,200 youth in DCFS foster care settings. That number is lower than it has been in recent years. That number is manageable. We can be more strategic in how we work with youth, their families and with you. We have improved the way we assign cases to foster homes so that children can stay connected to their schools and familiar settings, lessening their trauma. Now we can help you enroll young children in beneficial pre–school programs to lay the foundation for later learning. Supporting children's elementary and high school education will be easier for you too, now that we have implemented the Education Passport to track academic records.

I am pleased that we have aligned more services and programs to prepare young people for success through academics. However, our agency still must recognize that these same youth will need emotional supports. Now, from the time a case opens, we can get an understanding of the child's strengths and where he will need help through the Integrated Assessment Program. We have expanded that program beyond new cases to include youth facing a pending placement change. If we can provide more information about a child's needs, you will be able to make better parenting decisions.

Good decision-making must be at the core of what we do to keep children safe and serve their families. You may have heard of the move to work more with parents. Foster parents will be the bridge to help youth stay connected with their parents when we can plan for reunification. We are aligning practice, setting up training and fleshing out the needed programs to make this work well for everyone involved.

The task at hand is not easy, but it is vitally important. As you do your part, please know that you are appreciated—not only in May, but each day you sacrifice on behalf of the young people in our collective care.

Relatives count, too.

Relative caregivers make up 38 percent of out-of-home placements. Across the state more than 6,000 youth are living with relatives. Placing a foster child in the care of a relative, also called kinship care, is a double-edged sword for the caregiver. Families traditionally rally together when crisis occurs. But doing so when there is a parenting breakdown brings in a complicated set of interfamily dynamics much different from non-relative foster care.

Despite the built-in difficulties, when relative care works, it works well. Kinship care is documented to be one of the safest, healthiest types of placements. It is believed that children are more likely to overcome family trauma when they are able to stay in their community among people who share their personal history and traditions.

DCFS continues to reach out to relatives with services to help them as they help their young relatives. Less than half of the youth are in the care of relatives who are licensed. Relative caregivers who become licensed as foster partners receive more training and additional financial resources to help them provide for the children in their care. Licensed relatives can receive the licensed foster care board rates as opposed to the standard rate of need. That additional amount can ease the burden, especially when relatives so often interrupt their regular lives unexpectedly. Contact the child's caseworker for more details on licensing.



Celebrate Yourself during Foster Parent Appreciation Month

- 1. Take a look at your rights under the Foster Parent Law and remember there is a state statute to support your efforts.
- 2. Join a foster parent support group and take a friend.
- 3. Flip through the photo albums before bed to guarantee sweet dreams.
- 4. Serve a cake with candles for dessert and show the kids you deserve a special day.
- 5. Make plans with another foster family to trade an afternoon watching the others' kids. Take the time to do something to refresh yourself.
- 6. Send a card to encourage a foster parent who is having a rough time.
- 7. Make a list of good parenting decisions you have made lately. Tuck it away for a "rainy day."
- 8. Write a letter to your local newspaper explaining the importance of foster care. Make the public take notice.
- 9. Meet a couple of foster parent friends and update the kids' lifebooks over coffee.
- 10. Declare a "Good News Only Day." Let someone else field the phone calls from school and settle the squabbles. You'll have to take your turn the next week.

The Foster Parent Bill of Rights Public Act 89-19

Foster parents have the right to...

- 1. Be treated with dignity, respect and consideration.
- 2. Be provided pre-service and ongoing training to meet needs and improve skills.
- 3. Be informed about how to contact the placement agency for assistance to access support services.
- 4. Receive timely financial reimbursement for care included in the service plan.
- 5. Be provided with information about the agency's plan for placement, that includes supporting family relationships and cultural heritage.
- 6. Be provided fair, timely and impartial licensing investigations, including mediation and/or administrative review and explanations of decisions concerning licensing.
- 7. Receive additional or necessary information relevant to the child's care as it becomes available.
- 8. Be notified of scheduled meetings concerning the child. Be informed of decisions. To have input on the plan of service. To communicate with other professionals.
- 9. Have any information the caseworker has about the child and his family that pertains to the child's needs and care.
- 10. Receive written notice of any changes in the case plan or plans to end placement, along with the reason.
- 11. Receive timely notification of court hearings.
- 12. Be considered as a placement option for foster children formerly in their care.
- 13. Have access to an agency's or DCFS's appeals processes, without retaliation.
- 14. Be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and information on reporting staff misconduct.



Watch for signs in case teen dating becomes abusive

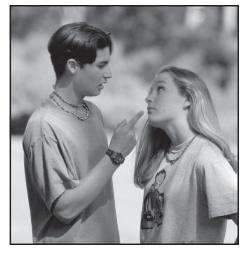
It would be nice to think of teen relationships just as "puppy love" or sweet romances. Yet, young love in its intensity can also lead to abuse. In fact, 1 in 5 high school students reports being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner, according to the Massachusettes Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Additionally, 60 percent of teens know someone who is in or has been in an abusive dating relationship, reported the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

Given the scope of the problem, a clear definition is important. Teen dating violence is a pattern of behavior used by one adolescent intimate partner to gain power and control over his or her partner. Victims of teen dating violence report that abuse takes on many forms of violence, such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. Physical abuse consists of an abusive partner pushing, shoving, slapping, kicking, punching, choking, or restraining his/her victim. Physical violence also includes an abuser throwing objects at the victim, abandoning the victim in a dangerous place, and preventing the victim from seeking medical assistance after being injured by the abuser.

An emotionally abused teen may experience his or her abusive partner ignoring the teen's feelings, making all the decisions for the teen, or humiliating the teen in front of others. A teen victim may also be continually

criticized and ridiculed by the abuser, called names or spoken to in a profane manner. Teens that are sexually abused by their boy/ girlfriends are often forced to have sex, are called insulting sexual names, or are accused of having sexual activity with others. Abusive teens may also threaten to hurt or spread false rumors about the victim if the victim refuses to engage in sexual activity with them. These are just some of the situations presented in a domestic violence prevention program from Rainbow House, a Chicago agency.

Given this grim scenario, one could ask, "why doesn't the victim just leave?" However, it is more enlightening to ask, "what is making the victim stay?" The latter question is less blaming of the victim, and is more exploratory of dynamics of abusive relationships. The Illinois Center for Violence Prevention describes many barriers to leaving an abusive relationship. Some reasons are due to simple logistics. An abused teen may have to see his/her abuser in school, and as a result, be afraid to leave for fear of retaliation. A teen may "breakup" with his/her abusive partner, but continue to be threatened or harassed by them at school. Also, a teenager usually is unable to move to another town or state to get away from his/her abuser, as an adult may be able to do. Some other barriers are emotional circumstances. For example, teens whose partners may have isolated them from other peers may be led to believe that they are "unlovable."



They may experience low selfesteem; and as a result, decide that they cannot have a better relationship. Teen victims may also deny the abuse, because their abusive partner has minimized the abuse or has put blame on the victim for its occurrence.

While the young person involved in the unhealthy relationship may not see it as abusive, there are signs.

Some warning signs of dating violence include when the abusive boyfriend or girlfriend:

- Acts jealous or possessive
- Tries to control his/her partner
- Tries to isolate the victim.
- Makes threats
- Uses verbal or physical abuse
- Loses his/her temper quickly or acts violent
- Blames the victim and others for their problems
- Pressures his or her partner for sex
- Thinks they have the right to control the other partner
- Becomes serious early into the relationship



Teen dating, con't.

When some of these warning signs are observed, it is important to engage in safety planning with the teen victim. Make sure the vouth's caseworker is aware of the concern. A conversation should always begin by telling the victim that the violence is not their fault, and that they do not deserve to be treated in an abusive manner. This is especially crucial when the abusing partner blames the teen for the abuse. Ask about the pattern or cycle of violence the youth has experienced, and what happens within the abuse. Ask the teen victim about the abuser – how dangerous is he or she? Does the abuser own a gun? Has the abuser made threats to kill the victim? It is imperative to remember that the victim may be in the greatest danger when she or he tries to get away from or terminate the relationship with the abuser. Map out a plan for an emergency situation, for example saving money in safe place, calling or going to the police station or hospital. It is also important to discuss who the teen can turn to for emotional support. This could be an understanding foster parent, caseworker, teacher, counselor, relative or friend.

Caregivers who need more information or are interested in having a presentation on Teen Dating Violence at a youth group or foster parent association meeting, can contact Nisha Patel, Clinical Domestic Violence Specialist, at 708–338–6691 or Nisha.Patel@illinois.gov.

Supervision is the key to preventing accidental drowning deaths

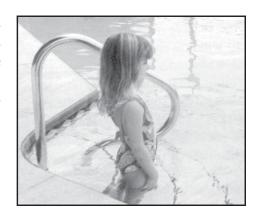
One Illinois infant drowned in less than six inches of water when his parent walked away to answer the phone. Another toddler drowned when she fell headfirst into a five-gallon bucket partially filled with water. In 2005, there were 24 accidental drowning deaths in Illinois. Adult supervision could have prevented these deaths.

Children cannot be left unattended around water even for one moment without the possibility of something tragic happening. The satewide campaign "Get Water Wise...Supervise" is letting the public know drowning can occur in seconds in small amounts of water in pools, bathtubs, buckets, and even decorative garden ponds. It is also important to teach children to stay away from water until an adult is present.

Following are some safety tips to help protect children from waterrelated tragedy.

Swimming pools:

- Keep ladders, patio furniture and toys away from aboveground pools. Toddlers are better climbers than you think!
- Fence in pool and lock the gate.
 Pool covers and alarms provide added protection.
- Young children should wear or use personal flotation devices, but they do not replace adult supervision.
- Remind babysitters and other caretakers not to leave children unattended near or in water.



- Appoint an adult who can swim to watch kids during pool parties.
- Learn CPR and keep rescue equipment, a phone and emergency numbers near all pools.

Baby pools:

- Don't be lulled into a false sense of security because of the shallowness of baby pools. Children can drown in as little as two inches of water, and should always be supervised when they are in a baby pool.
- Empty the pool immediately after use and store it upsidedown.

Bathtubs:

- Never leave a young child alone in a bathtub or rely on a bathtub seat for safety.
- Don't allow children to play alone in bathrooms.

Buckets:

- Five-gallon buckets of water pose a threat to babies and toddlers who may topple into them and be unable to get out.
- Empty and store all buckets out of children's reach.



DCFS INVITES YOU TO THE ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

August 10 – August 19, 2007 Corner of Peoria Road and Sangamon Ave., Springfield

Foster Families, Relative Caregiver Families, Adoptive Families, & Guardianship Families - Choose Your Own Discount Day!

This is Your ONLY Invitation to the State Fair. Please Act NOW if You Wish to Attend.

Please complete the coupon below if you would like to attend the Illinois State Fair and get the discounts available for foster, adoptive, and guardianship families. Please mail or fax the coupon to DCFS TODAY, and no later than June 30, 2007. Nothing will be sent to you unless you return this coupon. Reminders will NOT be sent.

If you return the coupon now, in July you will be sent:

- A ticket that will get your vehicle and everyone in it into the Fair and parked for one fee of \$3.
- 1 food ticket for each family member, worth \$3 in food or drink.
- One ride ticket for each family member that provides unlimited rides for \$10 during certain times **ONLY on Monday, August 13 Friday, August 17.**
- A special map of the fairgrounds made just for you.

Please Complete the Form Below & Mail or Fax to DCFS Today

COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS COUPON NO LATER THAN JUNE 30, 2007

Office of Communications, Department of Children and Family Services
406 East Monroe Street, Station 65
Springfield, IL 62701-1498
Fax: 217-524-0014

Tickets may NOT be requested by telephone.

We are a licensed foster family, relative caregiver, a guardianship family or have adopted a child through DCFS, and we would like to attend the 2007 Illinois State Fair. We understand that only our foster, adopted and guardianship children and family members who live in our home consistent with DCFS licensing regulations are eligible for these special offers.

	lease print the name and phone number of your licensing or subsidy worker. Phone number		
	PLEASE P	RINT CLEARLY	Y
Name:		Signature:	
Mailing Address:			Apt. No
City:	State:	Zip:	Phone:
For foster families only: We are supervised by DCFS We are supervised by a private as		Name	

Note - Please bring a copy of this invitation or a copy of a recent board or subsidy invoice with you when you attend the Fair. You may be asked to show this invitation or invoice in order to use the tickets. **It is illegal to sell these tickets or transfer them to any person who is not a family member living in your home.**



Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Bulletin

Legislative agenda

Ruth Jajko, chair of the policy committee led the discussion of House Bill 396, which as of March had passed from Committee to the full House. This proposal would establish a \$1,500 stipend for young people who become too old for the standard foster care system. The award could be used for education, driver's education or housing, as long as the youth has a diploma or GED.

Jerry Welenc, a foster parent and member of the policy committee reported on his trip to Springfield for the Budget Hearing in March. He spoke to the legislators about the role that foster parents play and advocated for an annual, automatic cost of living adjustment. Welenc was also part of the contingent that successfully advocated for the 2 percent increase that went into effect last year after remaining stagnant for five years.



Christina Schneider, from DCFS Legal, explained recent changes in adoption laws to the Statewide Council.

DCFS Policy Evaluation

The council also heard from members of the Cook South Regional Foster Parent Advisory

Council. That group presented its concerns about DCFS policy guide 2006.05, which made changes to the Bed Hold and Case Transfer Policy. The changes affect payments to foster parents who hold beds open while a child is out of the home, unless they meet a series of exceptions. Foster parents felt they should be compensated during certain circumstances, including a child's hospitalization. They pointed out that caregivers would still visit the child and participate in case planning. The council said it would review the policy to see how it stood up against the rights detailed in the Foster Parent Law.

Training

The training committee recommended working with the DCFS Office of Training to see how the reunification initiatives will be addressed in the Foster PRIDE preservice training. The council also will develop proposals for more co-training opportunities with foster parents and caseworkers. This could take the form of holding a joint caseworker and foster parent teambuilding session or Q&A following training. The council believes that caregivers and staff could mutually benefit from joint training.

For more information on the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council, contact the DCFS Office of Foster Parent support Services at 217-524-2422.

What happens when the subsidy ends?

The adoption or guardianship subsidy agreements include many benefits to families. These subsidies are contracts that do have an end. Subsidy agreements end when child reaches the age of 18 or thay can extend to 19 if he is still in high school. When the agreement ends, caregivers have to be prepared for many benefits included in the subsidy to end as well

The subsidy payment checks end when the subsidy ends. This can be an abrupt change in the household finances so the family should plan for this reality. The state medical card is also included in the subsidy. It too will end when the subsidy ends. Families should explore options for private insurance, other sources for publicly-funded medical care or employer-based insurance. The insurance gap for young people is a serious circumstance that should not come as a surprise.

DCFS will contact families by letter at least three months before the youth's 18th birthday. It is important that caregivers look out for and respond to the Notice of Intent to Discontinue Subsidy Payments on 18th Birthday. If a young person is still in high school, you will need to provide documentation to continue the subsidy. If you have questions about the 18th birthday notification, contact your family's post-adoption worker.





Create a Family Album before an adoptive placement

A Family Album is a great tool to "introduce" a prospective adoptive family (or new foster family) to a child prior to the first meeting. A simple collection of photographs with captions is helpful in addressing some of the anxiety a child would have before meeting a family for the first time. It also helps the child generate questions and initiate further discussion of the impending move.

A Family Album can take many forms, however, most families find it easiest to use a basic photo album or scrapbook format. Some families are very creative and design their own books; others rely on purchased books and embellish them to be appealing to a child. They do not have to be elaborate. Keep in mind that even two or three pictures in a simple album is better than nothing. A Family Album is not meant to impress a child, rather to give a glimpse of what life is like in your home.

Here are some ideas about what to include in your family album and some pictures to get you started.

Family members

Include everyone who lives in your home. Include names and ages of children. The prospective parents can use "Mom and Dad" or go by first names. Be sure to respect the child's preference and comfort level on



Dad's father also lives with us. Grandpa likes to read the paper each day as he drinks his coffee. Sometimes he watches the kids when Mom and Dad are not at home. His favorite card game is Crazy Eights.

this issue, if it is known. You may choose to include some extended family members too, as long as it isn't an overwhelming number.



This is where we keep the computer. It is also a good spot for homework.

Your home

Include pictures of the outside and inside of your home, especially the child's room. If the room is currently being used as a home office or for another purpose, you should still include it. You may add a caption such

as; "Right now, we use this as an office but can't wait to have you help us pick out paint and decorations to make it your room." Also include the backyard and any play areas in and around the home.

Pets

Pets are often a great icebreaker with children. Many children are drawn to pets, and playing with pets on initial visits can help ease some of the anxiety of the situation. If you have a large pet and/or the child is afraid of pets,



Our dog Champ is friendly. He is still young, so sometimes he jumps when he gets excited. He likes to lay his head on your knee.

try to reassure the child. For example, you could say; "George may look pretty big but he is very gentle and loves to play with kids" or "George lives in his own house in the backyard. Once he gets to know you, he is very loyal. Would you like to meet him?"

School

Take a picture of the school that the child will be attending. You could also mention how far it is from your home and whether the child will walk or take the bus. If you're not sure which school he will attend, take pictures of all the schools he could possibly attend.



The school is only four blocks away from our house. It starts with Pre-K and goes through the eighth grade. This is a new building so everything is bright and clean.



Shoesmith Park is at the corner. There is a diamond where the baseball team plays games. There are no basketball hoops, but we have one in our backyard.

Neighborhood/ Community

Give the child a sense of what the block, neighborhood and town are like. Are there any special characteristics the child might especially be interested in or that your family takes advantage of? Consider taking a picture of the neighborhood kids around his/her age. This is also an excellent opportunity to explain the placement to the

neighbor children, without the child having to face these inevitable questions alone.

Interests/Hobbies

Include information on what the family likes to do for fun and what the parents do for a living. You could include a picture of a parent in their work uniform, for instance. Or, you could include a picture that a child already in the family drew for the child.



Our daughters are on the track team. While they practice, Mom and Dad sometimes go to the track for exercise. We all like to go watch the track competitions.

Tips for creating a Family Album

- If you are having trouble getting started, ask your worker or another family if you can see a family album another family has completed. If you don't know what words to use, ask for your worker's help.
- Don't overwhelm the child with too many pictures or too much information. The simpler, the better.
- Leave the last page for the child. Ask him/her to add to it with their picture or a drawing. Or, you could insert an empty framed space with the caption: "We left this page for your picture, we can't wait to have you join us!"
- Use recent, quality photos. If you're in a hurry and don't have the right photos handy, use a disposable or Polaroid camera and/or overnight film developing.
- Consider making a "video family album" for the child.
- Decorate your pages with stickers or markers to make it appealing to a child or ask the child to help you decorate it. If you know anything about the child's interests, incorporate those elements, e.g. use a photo album with the child's favorite sports team or cartoon character.
- Keep sentences simple and use age and developmentally appropriate language.
- Be sure to ask the child's worker what the child wants to know and what information may decrease the child's anxiety.
- Have fun with it and remember that it doesn't have to be perfect.
- Be creative and let your personality come through. This will likely become a cherished memory book for you and the child.



Who do you call when...

A child in your home is having a psychiatric crisis that may require hospitalization?

Call the CARES line at 800-345-9049. However, if a child is a danger to himself or others, call 911 first. The CARES line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency? After you've tried to resolve the issue with the caseworker and supervisors, then call the Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798.

... You need to report a child missing or have information about a youth who has run away?

To report information on missing youth call 866-503-0184, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

...You have questions about your board check?

Call DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 if your check comes from DCFS. For other checks, contact your private agency.

...You have questions about your child's medical card? Call 800-228-6533.

... You are having a family crisis with your adopted child

Contact the Adoption Preservation Program that serves your area. Judy Pence at 217-557-5677 can direct you to the appropriate agency.

... You are interested in adopting one of the children featured in the newsletter?

If you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children waiting to be adopted, please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390, or see the AICI Web site www.adoptinfo-il.org.

...You have an idea for an article in the newsletter?

Each region has a reporter to help gather local news. They are listed in the regional section of each edition. Or you can contact the Editor, Vanessa James.

Tell It Like It Is—Readers Respond

Families Now and Forever wants to hear the real deal on caring for children from those how know best...YOU!

The new question is: *Do you notice that your children slip* academically or behaviorally during the summer months? How do you counter that and get them ready for school?

You contact me with your response by e-mail vanessa.james@illinois.gov or by phone at 312-814-6824. Reader surveys said the Tell It Like It Is feature was a favorite. Keep it coming by sending in your response today.

Crystallyn (7509)



Jesse (7603)



Please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390

Lewis (7536)



Michael (7602)





A family for me

Michael [7602] Michael, 10, is a thoughtful young man who always has interesting and insightful things to say. At home, he expresses his artistic side by drawing with his Etch-a-Sketch. When he's feeling more active, he likes to play on the family's trampoline. At school, Michael gets good grades and is especially talented at math. He also likes to read, and you can often find him browsing through sports magazines.

His foster mother said that Michael is loveable and affectionate. He tries hard to do well and get along with others. The family for Michael would provide him a safe, stable home and lots of nurturing and support.

Jesse [7603] Jesse, 14, is a funloving young man who is wellliked by his classmates. His passion is music, and he dreams of becoming a hip-hop star. Jesse is also very athletic and his favorite sport is football.

His foster parent and teachers said that Jesse is charming and respectful. He loves going to church each week. Jesse's forever family would offer love and encouragement, as well as a structured daily routine. You can help him maintain contact with his birth relatives.

Crystallyn [7509] Crystallyn, 17, often prepares meals with her foster mother, and afterwards, they sit down to enjoy the results together. When she's not helping in the kitchen, Crystallyn likes to listen to music on her headphones. She also enjoys making music at church, where she is an enthusiastic singer and tambourine player.

Her foster mother said Crystallyn can be very sweet and enjoys hugs. Her worker said Crystallyn is good with pets. The family for Crystallyn would be kind, patient, and supportive. You should provide Crystallyn with a structured home life and a consistent routine. Crystallyn said she would like to join a nice family that likes to have fun together.

Lewis [7536] Lewis, 16, is a friendly young man with an outgoing personality. He is very resilient, and adjusts quickly to new situations. In his free time, Lewis likes to listen

to music. He also loves to take care of animals, especially dogs.

His teachers said Lewis is a pleasure to spend time with. His attendance is excellent and he works hard at maintaining good grades. A forever family for Lewis would provide lots of love and encouragement. Lewis would like to join a family that is kind, accepting, and supportive.

Christopher [7010] Christopher, 15, is an active teenager who loves to swim and play basketball. When he's not playing sports, he's often watching them on TV. In his free time, Christopher enjoys playing video games, seeing movies, and visiting amusement parks.

His teachers said Christopher is a joy to have in the classroom. He works hard and always seeks help if he has questions. Parents for Christopher should be loving, patient, and supportive. Christopher said he would like to join a family with parents who like to talk with him. An Illinois family is preferred.



Please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390, or see the AICI Web site – www.adoptinfo-il.org if you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children waiting to be adopted.





Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

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Printing: DCFS Print Shop

Purpose: To help busy families more effectively parent children currently or formerly in DCFS care. To bring them the best information from the most knowledgeable sources. To promote statewide teamwork in finding permanency for children.

Address Changes: Families must notify their licensing representative, who will notify DCFS. Agencies should change office addresses or request staff copies through the Editor.

Illinois Families Now and Forever is published six times a year, bimonthly, and mailed to licensed foster parents, un-licensed relative caregivers, adoptive and guardianship families receiving subsidies, all DCFS staff and private agency staff as ordered. Material may not be reprinted in whole, in part or in any form whatsoever without permission from the Editor or DCFS. Opinions expressed by experts writing articles are no substitute for professional answers or opinions about a family's or child's specific situation. Consult a competent professional for answers to your specific questions.

Department of Children and Family Services©

Illinois Families Now and Forever Vanessa James, Editor Department of Children & Family Services 100 West Randolph – 6th Floor Chicago, Illinois 60601 PRESRT STD U.S. POSTAGE **PAID** SPRINGFIELD, IL PERMIT NO. 763



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Illinois State Fair ticket information inside on page 6!

Governor honors foster parents

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Page 10	Who to call when
Page 11	Family For Me profiles of waiting children